GAIL submitted its bid in response to an Invitation of Bids by the Ministry of Energy, Government of the Union of Myanmar for purchase of gas from Shwe and Shwe Phyu fields in A-1 block and Mya field in A-3 block in September, 2006. The Government of Myanmar subsequently intimated GAIL that they were reviewing their decision to sell this gas through the pipeline route. While exploring other options of seling the gas Ministry of Energy, Myanmar asked for a bid for 3.5 MMTPA of Liquefied Natural GAs (LNG). GAIL has submitted its bid to Myanmar in response to the same.

(b) As indicated in the DFR, the length of the possible pipeline from Myanmar border to Gaya (Bihar) is about 1573 kms. and the project cost is estimated at Rs. 8,500 crores. The pipeline was envisaged to route through Mizoram, Assam, West Bengal and Bihar.

(c) Yes, Sir. The operation and maintenance and monitoring of such pipelines is ensured through Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. Sectionalised Valve (SV) stations and Intermediate Pigging (IP) stations of such pipelines are monitored continuously. Besides, regular surveillance onland and by air.

Clearance of externally funded Kerala Health System Project

*394. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the competent Authority of Kerala has represented to the Central Government for the clearance of Kerala Health System Project, an externally funded project;

(b) if so, the details of the action taken in this regard; and

(c) whether any steps will be taken to recommend the Project in the light of the precarious situation prevailing in public health?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. Chief Minister, Government of Kerala, had submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister on July8,2006, which *inter alia*, requested the clearance of the Kerala Health System project proposal.

(b) and (c) Chief Minister, Government of Kerala had earlier represented *vide* letter dated 12th August, 2005 for Finance Ministry's clearance for

this proposal for World Bank assistance. A reply was sent to the Chief Minister, Kerala stating that Kerala, being a debt-stressed state, may take recourse to additional external borrowings for priority projects, under the existing guidelines by agreeing to substitute or waive any other agreed source of borrowing and use that space for such additional borrowing. The Government of Kerala is yet to respond in this regard.

Shortage of Indian Airlines staff at Chennai airport

*395. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indian Airlines staff working under various categories in major airports *viz.* Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai;

(b) whether Government are aware that there is a shortage of Indian Airlines staff in Chennai airport as compared to other private airlines; and

(c) what plans Government have to rectify the said shortage of Indian Airlines staff in Chennai airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The total number of Indian Airlines' staff working under various categories in Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai are 1882, 890, 1641 and 570 respectively.

(b) and (c) In the year 2000, the Government, while reverting the age of retirement from 60 years to 58 years in respect of employees of Indian Airlines Lts., had also imposed a freeze on external recruitment in the non-operational categories with a view to lower the employee to aircraft ratio and decrease the over head expenditure of Indian Airlines Ltd. Further, the change in work-norms coupled with adoption of new technologies has resulted in lesser requirement of manpower particularly in non-core activity areas. As the employee to aircraft ratio in Indian Airlines still continues to be very high as compared to other private carriers, there is no proposal at present to fill up the present vacancies which are based on old work-norms. However, for any additional requirement beyond the permanent strength available with Indian Airlines, it resorts to engagement of short-term/ad-hoc arrangements like redeployment of staff/officers from other Departments, engagement of daily rated employees and outsourcing certain activities.